1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
SP23 Trumai SP23

The fishing grounds and the still productive fruit trees of the old villages were considered to be the domain of the Trumaí, and these rights were apparently respected by others. When the village moved in search of new land, it was usually to one of the old sites, whose name the new village would take.

The Trumaí were once feared by the other tribes of the upper Xingú and were evidently a relatively numerous and vigorous people. However, when Quain visited them in 1938, they numbered only 43, and only ten years later, in 1948, the population had shrunken to a meagre 25.[11] Their small numbers had forced them to abandon village life once since Quain's visit, but they subsequently reunited in a new community.[11a]

Warfare

The topography of the flat upper Xingú Basin encourages considerable contact between tribes. The waterways are extensive and have importance beyond subsistence, as they are the chief avenues of trade and warfare. Communication through the river and flood plain system is the main reason for the high degree of cultural homogeneity that has been achieved by these tribes of diverse origins and languages. Intertribal relations are not confined to trade and warfare, but enter the spheres of social organization, ceremonialism and mythology.

Intertribal bonds within the upper Xingú Basin were based on peaceful relations between the tribes. These tribes formed part of a bounded social system in which groups outside the area did not take part. The Bakairí Indians of the Paranatinga River were on a friendly basis with the headwaters groups only because they had once lived on the Batoví River. Other tribes were uniformly enemies, regardless of cultural or linguistic affinities. Despite this peaceful interaction among the upper Xingú villages, there was considerable mutual fear and hostility between them which was expressed in witchcraft, petty thievery and intimidation. The practice of sorcery upon other villages is especially significant, in that sorcery is used in nearly all cultures only between people who share close interpersonal ties. This illustrates better than anything else the high degree of intervillage integration in the upper Xingú River Basin. The component groups constitute far more than a culture area — they form a society.

Despite the nominal peace within the upper Xingú area, the Trumaí lived in dread of their neighbors, and with good reason.[12] Situated

[11] Oberg 1953, p. 4.

[11a] Latest reports state that a measles epidemic has wrought great havoc, and that the few survivors have all joined other groups.

[12] Although fear of neighboring groups is general in the upper Xingú, de Lima (1949, p. 25) noted it to be especially strong among the numerically weak Trumaí.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
SP23 Trumai SP23

The plaza was the center of Trumaí social life. Here guests were entertained, ceremonials and wrestling matches were held, and the men gathered daily. Although the women might sit in front of their houses and watch these activities, they were not allowed to come near the log bench, even when the men were not there. The plaza of the Trumaí village was also used as the burying ground.

A short distance north of the circle of houses, on the path to the two main garden clearings of the Trumaí, was another smaller clearing used during the *ole*, or manioc, ceremonies. Other paths radiated outward from the village to the other gardens and to nearby groves of *piquí* trees. Quain noticed that the paths leading to the Kamayurá village were much broader and cleaner. The Kamayurá were proud of their paths and kept them in good condition. Their plaza was also clearer of weeds and trash than that of the Trumaí.

Of the four completed houses in the village, two were as large as those of the Kamayurá, but the other two, which were much smaller, were considered by Quain's informants to be genuinely Trumaí in type. Insofar as is known, the details of the construction and shape of all four were substantially the same. They had an elliptical floor plan and were haystack-shaped. Although the side walls were only four feet high, the roof attained a height of fifteen feet. The silhouette of the house was an almost smooth curve from ridge pole to ground. The frame was covered with a grass thatch. There were no windows, and a single entry opened on the plaza.

Each family occupied its own section of the house and had its own fireplace. Personal belongings hung from the walls and ceilings or were placed on small shelves. Hammocks were hung between the side wall posts and the two center posts, the woman's hammock beneath that of her husband. Except for two nuclear families that screened off their sections with blankets and cloth given them by Quain, there was no internal division of the house.

The two largest garden clearings were situated respectively about one mile northeast and one mile northwest of the village. Three small ones were located southeast of the settlement. In order of size, the gardens were named Nariatan, Waniwanitan, Anariatan, Tan Toreake, and Tandatake. Nariatan, the largest, contained, by Quain's rough calculation, approximately seven acres divided into ten plots, representing the gardens of seven men. One plot contained two acres, but the average garden varied between one-fourth and one acre in size. One of the men had erected a temporary thatch shelter in his plot, providing protection from the sun, but not from the rain. Inside there was only a basket of manioc flour, a rack for cooking fish, and a large shallow pot into which manioc was grated. This was the sole garden shelter Quain saw, and, significantly, it belonged to the most industrious horticulturist in the village.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
SP23 Trumai SP23

The path which led from the village to Nariatan, the northwestern garden clearing, passed through the previously mentioned ceremonial clearing north of the village. A short distance beyond this point, a branch took off to the east and led to Waniwanitan, the northeastern and second largest clearing, which contained nine garden plots totaling approximately five acres. Each garden was tilled by a different man, but two men had plots in both Nariatan and Waniwanitan. The size of the average garden was one-half acre. There was no newly cleared land, and, in contrast to Nariatan which was still yielding, nearly all of the crop (mostly manioc) had either died or been harvested. Quain noticed that the soil in Nariatan had a gray tone, whereas that of Waniwanitan was reddish in hue. This difference in color was due to the ashes deposited by the more recent burning over of the former site.

Nariatan was a newer garden than Waniwanitan, and the former was planted to a variety of crops while the latter was nearly all in manioc. This is indicative of the common tropical forest slash and burn system whereby second year gardens are used only for manioc growing, and new areas in which the soil is still comparatively rich are used for other vegetables in addition to manioc. The Trumaí are unique, however, in that the garden clearing was divided into individually owned plots. Smaller individual gardens or large gardens cleared and cultivated collectively are the general rule in the rain forests of South America.

The three other clearings were small, and each contained one garden plot. One was one-quarter acre in size, while the other two each comprised one-half acre. These small gardens were connected with the village by separate paths and were closer to it than the two larger clearings. Anariatan, Nariatan and Waniwanitan were named after old village sites, but Quain knew of no abandoned locations from which the names Tan Toreake and Tandatake could have been derived.

Horticultural Techniques

It is difficult to assess the relative importance of horticulture, fishing and gathering in the subsistence economy of the Trumaí. At different times of the year each made the major contribution to the diet. Most garden products became available at about the middle of the rainy season, but manioc was dug up when needed throughout the year. Fish and manioc were staples the year-round, although fishing was poorer during the rains. Each was more important in the total diet than were the products of gathering. However, the subsistence of the Trumaí at certain times of the year, especially in the early part of the rainy season, would have been seriously threatened without the wild foods.

The agricultural cycle started in the early part of the dry season when the clearings needed for the next rainy season's gardens were made.